

opportunities of displaying his abilities, and so raised him in the esteem of *Labyneus* that he sent him on an embassy into *Egypt*. *Æsop* acquitted himself of his commission to *Amasis* with great reputation, and returned to *Labyneus*, laden with honours and rewards. He at length went once more to visit *Greece*, and having heard of the wisdom, piety, and learning of the inhabitants of *Delphos*, paid them a visit when, to his great surprise, he found them immoral, ignorant and conceited; on which he boldly reproved them, and endeavoured to make them alter their conduct. The magistrates were greatly offended at this liberty, and fearing lest he should expose their vices in other countries, resolved to take away his life; but not thinking it safe to do this privately, they resolved to do it under the form of Justice. For this purpose, when he was preparing for his journey, they caused a golden cup belonging to the temple, to be conveyed into his baggage. He was no sooner out of the town than he was pursued, taken, and charged with sacrilege: *Æsop* pleaded his innocence, and laughed at them as a set of madmen; but his boxes being searched, the cup

cup was found, and *Æsop* hurried away to prison. The next day he was brought into court, where, notwithstanding he gave the clearest proofs of his innocence, he was sentenced to be thrown from a steep precipice; when with great difficulty he prevailed on them to hear him speak a few words, and told them a fable that was applicable to his present circumstances: which made no impression on the hearts of the *Delphians*, but as they were calling to the executioner to do his office, *Æsop* suddenly gave them the slip, and fled to an altar which stood just by; but the *Delphians* told him, that the altars of the Gods afforded no sanctuary to those who robbed their temples; upon which he told them a fable of a *Beetle*, who being injured by an *Eagle*, found means, notwithstanding his contemptible appearance, to draw down vengeance upon her powerful oppressor: and 'you, added he, ought not to flatter yourselves that your violation of justice and oppression of the innocent will escape unpunished.' At this the magistrates being still more enraged, commanded the officers to take him from the altar and drag him to execution; when *Æsop*, finding that neither